

## THE HARVEST

“Alice is trapped by the pleasure principle. She wants to create a new self, but she feels that she must feed the expectations of others. Alice had always been a girl who followed the rules. Growing up in a small, conservative town, she learned early on that conformity was the key to acceptance. And so, she became the perfect daughter, the perfect student, the perfect friend. She never got into trouble. She was conscientious in the classroom. On the surface, she seemed like the embodiment of a well-adjusted, ideal young woman.”

Deep down, Alice felt trapped. She longed to break free from the expectations that had been placed upon her, to create her own path and live life on her own terms. She yearned to explore her creative side and express her true self, but the fear of disappointing those around her held her back.

Her parents, who had always been strict and overbearing, constantly reminded her of their high expectations for her. They had planned out her entire future, and Alice was expected to follow in their footsteps. They wanted her to become a lawyer, just like her father, and marry a successful man from a prestigious family. To them, that was the ultimate definition of success and happiness.

Alice understood the risks in charting a path for herself. Since her upbringing had been so strict, her emotions could take a hold of her. She could give in to her worst excesses. Even if she had developed an artistic side, she often could not maintain long-term concentration. She would get caught up in bouts depression followed by extreme highs. This seemed to interfere with her creativity.

When she shared her dreams with her parents, they expressed doubt and skepticism

“This might be fun for you, but you’re just not that good.”

Alice knew differently, but she easily get distracted by her parents.

“I need to figure things out for myself.”

Under these circumstances, she started to depend too much on her friends. They didn’t understand the artistic commitment that she need for work. Alice realized how much work that she would need to do to find success. Did she have enough of a commitment to resist her critics. She doubted herself. This prevented her from doing what she need to do for self-enrichment.

Alice was losing her creative edge. The pleasure principle seemed to come to the surface so that she could deal with her feelings of shame. There was almost a perverse side to her desires. This started to influence her artistic inspiration. She got more caught up with the pleasure principle. She immersed herself in this vision.

She felt that her beliefs were rooted in a deeper history. Other artists had confronted their challenges in trying to express the foundation of their creative outlook. This went beyond feelings of comfort. She wanted to understand how to break to anything that might be called the pleasure principle. Was she embracing a deep suffering?”

“You cannot take this from me.”

“What are you talking about?”

Alice's transformation was all about creating art a new identity, a self unburdened by conformity. This added to her vulnerability. Her art became more bizarre. She hid all this from her parents.

There was nothing idealistic in her vision. There was a cult of degradation that seemed to affect her work. She wanted to depict something more uplifting. But she loved this walk on the wild side.

“Art is meant to be a rebellion, a defiance against the ordinary,” Ethan remarked. “You're onto something truly unique here, Alice. Don't let anyone stifle your creativity.”

He was encouraging in these new pursuits. She was no longer herself. Lily was a musician, who added to this same perspective. This was more than enchantment. The music advanced this journey into a world of darkness.

“Alice, are you okay?”

“This is art. This is nothing like you think it is.”

“Sometimes, she wasn't sure. She had opened a door, and she was not sure if she could deal with these contrary influences. It was impossible to find a balance.

“You need to make sure that you don't get fucked up.”

“I know the difference.”

She was able to produce some wonderful work. But there was an obsession with cruelty that characterized these paintings.

“You are trying too hard to shock people.”

“It is not like that. I want people to think.”

It was more than that. She stayed busy. She attracted more interest among other artists. But she felt that she needed a personality to go along with her creative endeavors. She was much more a person in turmoil.

What kind of vision did she have for her future?

“I am not morose. I like to explore.”

She wasn't depressed. But her life seemed more inconsistent. From moment to moment, it became difficult to pin her down. She would get totally immersed in a situation. She would find new friends. Then she would drop them as soon as she met them.

“I am very busy with my art.”

She felt pressured to create new pieces. And she wouldn't want to see anyone. Then she would hang out with people, who took advantage of her, and brought her down.

Ethan, noticing the change in Alice's demeanor, approached her with concern. “What's going on, Alice? You seem distant,”

“I'm just... afraid,” Alice admitted,

Alice only became more confused. But she tried her best not to reveal herself.

Others questioned her commitment, and this influenced her reception in the art world. Could she attain the confidence to resist these feelings.

“I am afraid that I am going to lose my direction.”

She listened to Ethan

She replied, “I am not looking for simple answers.”

But there were times that she gave in to the strangest appeals. She would disappear for days.

“I have no idea where I have been.”

She didn't want to think about it.

“I need to talk to someone.”

Dr. Martinez could give her what she needed.

“You don’t have to fear your creativity.”

“It is not that. I get pulled into the most unusual situations.”

She didn’t want to believe that someone else could put everything into place. This situation was too difficult to contemplate.

“I know who I am. But there are moments when I do not feel as if I am being true to myself. What do I need to do to sort it out.”

She had thought that her art would tell her what she needed to hear. It was not working out like that.

“Your art is not just a rebellion. You are creating a new world for yourself.”

Unfortunately, she was dealing with a terrible situation. She was carrying a lot of emotional baggage.

“I feel as if I have to give answers to other people. I cannot even figure it out for myself.”

Alice didn’t want to talk about it. There seemed to be too much pressure on herself.

“My art can only say so much. But I want it to have a more important message.”

She was giving way too much of herself to the world. She would never understand what she needed for own betterment. That made her feel divided.

“I want my art to help me figure out the puzzle.”

“Would that even be possible?”

That was the only thing that seemed to matter.

“You cannot move mountains.”

“Why not?”

After she had reached this high point, she could feel her world crash around her. And she would need to disappear.

“Dr. Martinez, what makes me like this? Am I doing this to myself?”

This seemed to be a more intricate puzzle.

“You want your work to give you the answer for your life. But you are only making it impossible for yourself.”

“I have this under control.”

“You wish.”

None of this offered a clear answer. It only made her art more tortured. She wanted to gratify her fans as if she was solving her dilemma.

“Sometimes, this matters.”

“Does this matter now?”

“Do you have a plan to change this?”

“Some kind of baptism in fire.”

“What is that about?”

“We are all the same.”

“What is the dream?”

Alice imagined a conversation with Dr. Martinez, but she felt other influences. She was only working things out with herself. There were too many voices pulling her in different directions.

“You are offering these remedies, but they are doing nothing for me.”

“How do you feel?”

“Terrible.”

“Wonderful.”

“I have got this on my own. I do not need someone else to tell me.”

How was her art affected by these influences? She tried to contain these effects. But her moments of brilliance would be followed by total obscurity. She would lose her perspective. This seemed to weaken the artistic vision.

“I am not looking for followers. I do what I need to do.”

That did not seem to be enough of an explanation. There was so much inconsistency.

“Dr. Martinez, you may be interfering with the clarity of my artistic vision.”

“You tell me that you feel divided.”

“It is not up to you to try to fix me.”

“That is not my goal.”

But she felt this need to resist.

“There is a self-defeating aspect to your art.”

“Who is telling me this?”

“Is my art supposed to tell me what to do?”

“I am afraid that the shadows will consume me, that the doubts will my originality. I will get lost in darkness.”

Ethan tried to comfort her.

“You have no idea what is going on.”

“We are all waiting for something that will never happen. We are waiting for something that will never happen.”

Dr. Martinez tried to reassure her, “Fear is a natural part of any journey.”

“You have no idea what this is about.”

“What do you need to tell me?”

Everything seemed like a distraction. But she would only be able to push out there if she had a greater inspiration. Where would it originate? She was messing with her own consciousness. She was at the edge of sanity.

“What do you want to tell me? That you have spent money on a new outfit to make you look better.”

“Are you angry with me?”

“I did not get what I needed.”

“Be there when I need you to be there.”

“Why should anyone believe this Ethan guy. What is he about?”

“What is any of us about?”

“We have been doing for a long time.”

“I do not need you talking to me about the canvas. Art is about a way of life, not the object that is created.”

“Are you getting yourself ready for that moment.”

“I am living in the moment.”

“Whatever that mean.”

“This could not be worse.”

“This is worse.”

“We need total commitment.”

“Who else could do better?”

“We can do much better.”

“I made a statement.”

“Can you even draw a straight line?”

“It is all about the proper representation of force.”

“Do you feel forced?”

“We are all propelled by an idea.”

Perhaps, Lincoln could devise a manifesto. He had his own view of writing and entertainment.

“I want to describe it to you in simplest terms. Time acquires substantial form. And you can put yourself in touch with that manifestation.”

“You could lose it all in a moment.”

“I am losing it all in this moment.”

“I do not know what that is.”

“People like it.”

“Lincoln, can you make me have fun right now.”

“Are we that simple?”

He needed to show that he had that power.

“What do I do that is different than Alice?”

“I believe.”

“We all believe.”

“Lincoln, you need more science.”

“Dina can guide me.”

“She needs that reassurance.”

“How does that knowledge differ from what the artist believes?”

“We are not going to make it.”

“I have my body. And I can conquer time.”

“Tell me in two days.”

“I am inspired by the gods.”

“You have seen Alice’s works. What is she telling you?”

“She has talent. But it is not that essential for me.”

“What do you know that no one else knows?”

“I am going to have to spend some cash to have some fun.”

“I guess that is how it is meant to work.”

“This is a work in progress.”

“That is what Richard said to you.”

“Lincoln.”

“Someone needs to touch your heart.”

“That is what he said.”

“I have money on this.”

“Richard you will win.”

“You are battling Lincoln.”

“I am smooth. I can read from my book. I can put you in it.  
Was Alice able to include all this in her work?”

“You are putting all this on me.”

“This is all me.”

“I am face-to-face with your bones.”

“Where does this end?”

“It ends when I look you in the eyes.”

“Everyone wants a cut.”

“There is no cut.”

“This is art.”

“This is a way of protecting our investments.”

“What do I get in return?”

“You tell me.”

She needed to throw herself into this experience. She would eventually encounter some kind of acknowledgement.

“Why should we accept a resolution to this puzzle.”

“I need to explore the darkness.”

“Where is this going to take you?”

“There is no risk.”

“This is a different day.”

“When does everything get crazy?”

“What are you waiting for?”

“You are not a responsible person.”

“You are like the wolf.”

“What is the meaning of the world in your work?”

“This is getting worse.”

“Bring me my meal.”

“Bring me my love.”

“We all love you, and we have hopes for the future.”

“Why is that?”

“I get what I want.”

“Good for you.”

“We go back to Lancer. Why does she believe it?”

“That is how the world is created.”

“This is the time to destroy it.”

What was Alice trying to portray? This seemed to be the brilliance of her work.”

“I see what I want to see.”

“Lincoln, what do you see?”

“I see desire.”

“I want you to want me.”

“You can do this.”

“I need you along.”

“What are you making?”

“There are other ways to do this.”

“I can balance it all out.”

“She is good with this.”

“Why are you good at the job?”

“I get things done.”

“You are an inspiration.”

“I go in, I turn on the machine, and I do the job.”

“It makes doughnuts.”

“Who will eat the doughnuts? Who will love the doughnuts?”

“That is another book.”

“Who will love these works of art.”

Alice realized that it was all about the canvas of the mind. And she held on that connection.

“There is so much ahead of me.”

“He does not see that he is already finished.”

“My heart beats.”

“I want to know Lincoln.”

“I am the writer.”

“Take the hit.”

“Take the love.”

“What do you love?”

“I do not feel good. I want to go home.”

“Can I still come?”

“The world is waiting for you.”

“What do you want to eat?”

“What do you want?”

“The good stuff.”

“When are they going to clean up the blood?”

“That is part of the work of art.”

“That is a bizarre way to think about it.”

“I affect people deeply.”

“I get in your soul.”

“What is that about me?”

“An aspect of genius.”

“What makes you think that you know?”

“They all know together.”

“Give me a canvas.”

“Give me a reason.”

“Give me a cause.”

“This is never what you think it is.”

“This is never what you know it is.”

Alice reached for the paint brush.

“There is a brilliance to that gesture.”

“I was there with you.”

“Who paid for this?”

“Do you like her?”

“She is my heart patient.”

The artist needs to be a healer.

“Alice, I’ve noticed you’ve been changing, evolving in ways I can’t fully grasp. It feels like we’re on different paths now.”

“I am on the devil’s road.”

“This all goes in stages.”

“We are all going away together.”

“There is someone who loves you.”

“You can tell in the painting.”

“Show me who you are. Show me what you have.”

“It will make sense after I sleep.”

“All these painting are about my dreams.”

“This will not be a career.”

“I have a job.”

“Are you devoted to work?”

“We could believe together.”

She found herself standing on the precipice of a realization—one that cast a shadow over the vibrant colors of her newfound identity. The hidden psychology she had unraveled now extended to the intricacies of intimate connections.

“People talk about the heart as if it is this kind of emotional canvas. It beats faster and slower.

What is inside me?”

“I feel all warm.”

“Whoever you are, get a life.”

“I am glad that you did not say that to me.”

Alice worried what they might be saying about her works. This made her doubt her abilities.

“Are they whispering?”

“This art is nothing like what I create.”

“Art should not just be a piece of furniture, something to match the hues of the room.”

“Why is this going to make any difference?”

“Do not try to destroy my life in that way.”

“Alice, you need to see someone.”

“What does any of that mean?”

“Figure that out for yourself.”

“What if they gave a party, and no one came.”

“I need more than that.”

“What is the blessing?”

“Everything happens at home.”



“She doesn’t live her anymore.”  
 “I am not obsessional. I only like tragedy.”  
 “Did you work on this?”  
 “You are still going to have to milk the cows.”  
 “I do not want the milk.”  
 “You do not need the cow.”  
 “You do not need the canvas.”  
 “Was that expected?”  
 “Lincoln has all this down.”  
 This was a turning point.  
 “Ethan, you are so judgmental.”  
 “You do not know what I see.”  
 “Do you appreciate what is going on here?”  
 “The day has come and gone.”  
 “I will get you ready for the next day.”  
 “Who do you love?”  
 “Bring your bodyguard.”  
 “Bring you love.”

Despite Ethan's reassurance, Alice couldn't escape the whispers of doubt that followed her like shadows. The once-supportive community now questioned the sustainability of her chosen path. She overheard hushed conversations, felt the judgmental stares, and sensed the collective discomfort that lingered in the air.

In an attempt to confront her fears, Alice decided to host an open studio event, inviting the town to witness the evolution of her art and, by extension, her identity. As the day approached, the shadows of doubt intensified. Alice wondered if she was inviting judgment, exposing herself to ridicule, or risking the rejection of those she cared about.

The open studio day arrived, and the atmosphere buzzed with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism. Alice stood amidst her creations, vulnerable yet resolute. The shadows of doubt seemed to stretch, threatening to overshadow the vibrant hues of her artistic expression.

As visitors explored her studio, Alice engaged in conversations, attempting to bridge the gap between her unconventional world and the expectations of her community. Slowly, the skepticism began to wane, replaced by genuine curiosity and, in some cases, appreciation.

The open studio event became a turning point. Alice realized that, while shadows of doubt may persist, they were not insurmountable. Each person who connected with her art became a beacon of light, dispelling the shadows that sought to dim her creative spirit.

Embracing the vulnerability of her journey, Alice learned that shadows were not enemies to be feared but rather companions on the path to authenticity. As she navigated through doubts, she discovered the strength within her to cast her own light, illuminating the shadows and transforming them into integral parts of her artistic narrative. The journey continued, with Alice now more resilient, more aware of the interplay between shadows and light in the pursuit of her true self.

In the aftermath of the open studio event, Alice found herself delving into the hidden recesses of her own mind. The shadows, once external, now manifested as internal struggles and questions about the psychology that underpinned her journey.

She sought guidance from a local psychologist, Dr. Elena Martinez, who specialized in the intersection of creativity and self-discovery. As Alice entered the cozy office adorned with abstract art, she couldn't help but feel a mix of anticipation and vulnerability.

Dr. Martinez welcomed Alice with a warm smile, inviting her to explore the canvas of her mind. Together, they embarked on a journey through the labyrinth of Alice's thoughts and emotions, unraveling the complexities that shaped her fears and desires.

“Creativity often emerges as a response to inner conflict.”

“You need to quiet down your demons.”

“What is the dialogue within?”

“What are you afraid?”

“Let's explore these shadows together.”

“I do not want to die in the dark.”

“Can you paint with your eyes closed?”

“It is all about the feeling.”

“Do you know what you are talking about?”

“I am talking shit.”

“Have mercy on me!”

“You need to bleed more. You need to show that you are real.”

“We have been waiting for dinner.”

“Mix it up.”

“I followed your lead.”

“I did it all too well.”

“Those were great days”

“And those days are gone.”

“Too much of a good thing.”

“And you do not have it anymore.”

“I owe you one.”

“I owe you two more.”

“Transformation often comes with sacrifices, Alice. As you evolve, relationships may undergo shifts. It's a painful but inevitable part of the journey.”

The mind healer was going to guide her to another stage of personal growth.

“Why can't I do this on my own.”

“Your art is getting in the way of what you want to create.”

Nothing creative awaited her. She faced this lull.

“This is not that fun.”

“I am going to write down everything that you say.”

“Are there pictures.”

“This could not be worse.”

“We all have our art.”

“Then we get the song.”

“Does any of that matter?”

“There is a clown.”

“That is part of the symbolism.”

“He is locked into his symbolic role.”

“Keep your eyes open.”

“They are waiting for you.”

“And I am all done.”